

"The FDA has released information regarding an outbreak of E.coli that the agency believes is related to contaminated bagged fresh spinach. I am assured that all the appropriate federal and state officials are working to define the source of the contamination and prevent the disbursement of any suspect packages.

"I am confident that the industry will go above and beyond the call to resolve the problem once the source of any contamination is identified. Food safety is of paramount importance, both to consumers and producers. The public can have confidence that the FDA and the produce industry will do everything possible to ensure public health and safety. The produce industry of the Salinas Valley is known for its market responsiveness and integrity and I have faith that in this situation, too, it will do what is right and do it immediately. I have no doubt that workers in the fields and processors in the packaging houses are dedicated employees of the industry and will cooperate to help solve the problem.

"I will ask FDA to provide me a personal briefing on the track of this outbreak and will work with them and the industry to bring this situation to a quick, positive and healthful end."